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NSC BRIEFING

12 August 1954

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PERFORMANCE OF SOVIET TYPE 37

25X1X7

- I. [redacted] estimate of the new Soviet [redacted]
heavy bomber's probable performance, as it
will be in 1957, now available. [redacted]

25X1X7

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Optimum Mission	
Take off weight	345,000 lbs.
Bomb load	10,000 lbs.
Combat radius	2,600 nm.
Combat range	5,100 nm.
Target altitude	43,700 ft.
Maximum targets	487 kts.

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This performance estimate (with 10,000 lb. bomb load, i.e. multi-megaton weapon)* indicates that, in absence forward staging (on Chukotsk) and range extension (in-flight refueling or one-way missions), striking power of Type 37 is still generally oriented toward Europe, Asia, and peripheral areas. Thus, full measure of Type 37's threat to US depends upon:

- A. Soviet development of in-flight refueling (capability not yet demonstrated and requiring 18-24 months to develop).
- B. Soviet decision in 1957 to expend all 56 Type 37's then estimated to be operational on missions where only half might be expected to reach targets.

* For other bomb-weight combinations see "Background - Bomb Load Variations."

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III New performance estimate, 1958-59
With 1957 picture unchanged, conventional
Tu-4 would still figure prominently.
medium jet - Type 39 - would be powerful
element of strength against Eurasian and
peripheral targets; Type 37 would just be
reaching significant quantities.

A. In view Soviet nuclear capabilities,
picture is serious, formidable.

B. But picture not particularly alarming
as regards continental US.

C. With subsequent combination of Type 97
series production, forward staging
bases in operational condition, and
development of effective in-flight
refueling, however Soviet air threat
to US increases sharply. becomes
very grave by 1958-59.